

**California Children and Families
State Commission Meeting
Wednesday, August 18, 1999
Los Angeles Board of Education – Board Room H160
Los Angeles, CA**

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:45 a.m.

Chair Rob Reiner read the following statement: “Use of these school premises has been granted pursuant to the provisions of Sections 39360 et seq. of the Education Code of the State of California to the California Children and Families State Commission from the Board of Education of the Los Angeles Unified School District. The Board of Education does not sponsor or take responsibility, nor does it necessarily endorse any of the activities, statements or opinions which may be expressed at this meeting or activity.”

Chair Reiner thanked the Los Angeles Board of Education for providing the meeting facilities and asked that audience members who wish to be on the commission’s mailing list to please sign in.

II. Roll Call

Commissioners present: Kim Belshe, Sandra Gutierrez, Susan lacey, Bob Ross, Patty Siegel, Margaret Fortune, Ed Melia, Jane Henderson (Executive Director).

Commissioners not present: Louis Vismara

III. Approval of the Minutes from the June 24, 1999, State Commission Meeting

Bob Ross moved to approve the minutes from the June 24, 1999, State Commission meeting; Patty Siegel seconded. The motion passed with a vote of 6 to 0.

IV. Report from the Los Angeles Children and Families Commission

Neal Kaufman reported that the Los Angeles Commission is working on a strategic plan, which they hope to finish by February. They are also working on bylaws, a job description for an Executive Director, and a mission/vision statement. They have held public hearings, educational forums and small informal presentations by individual commissioners. The commission strives to be inclusive and is very interested in he welcome baby kit and how it will work in Los Angeles.

V. Chairman's Report

Chair Reiner provided an update on legislation relevant to the commission. AB 1576 (sponsored by Assemblyman Gallegos) which removes "First" from the commission's name and which defines "relevant county" has been signed and passed into law. SB 689 (sponsored by Senator Johnston) includes clarifying language for the conflict of interest concern (1090/91) and has been signed and passed into law.

VI. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director, Jane Henderson announced that she has been working extensively on the guidelines. Her other top priority is to hire staff, secure an office, order equipment, etc. Jane has hired a Chief Deputy Director, Joe Munso, and a Communications Director, Kristina Parham. Jane thanked the Packard Foundation for their support in the hiring of staff until state paperwork can be processed. Jane reported that Kynna Wright and Nicole Singer have been hired as consultants for the technical assistance advisory committee. She reported that the Foundation Consortium and the state commission are sponsoring follow-up workshops with Mark Friedman. Finally, she reported that there are about 15 counties that have not fulfilled the three basic requirements to receive planning funds.

VII. Report from the Guidelines Advisory Committee

Chair Reiner stated that the commission will table the report from the guidelines advisory committee until the public hearing on the guidelines.

VIII. Report from the Technical Assistance Advisory Committee

Ed Melia reported that the technical assistance advisory committee is giving many assignments to its staff. Nicole Singer developed an instrument to send to county commissions to find out where and what type of technical assistance is needed. He also reported that federal partners are very anxious to provide technical support at the local level. The technical assistance committee is going to meet tomorrow.

Bob Ross expressed concern that 15 counties have not formed commissions yet.

Jane Henderson stated that most of the counties have been advised of what requirements they must fulfill in order to receive planning funds. Most county commissions merely need to, for example, revise their ordinance. Only a few counties have not formed a commission yet.

IX. Report from Kim Belshe and Bob Ross Regarding State Commission Expenditures

Kim Belshe reported that the state commission's priorities in terms of expenditures are a media campaign (that Kristina Parham will work on) and a series of roundtable informational meetings to collect expert advice on how to spend the state commission's allotment of the funds. Kim suggested that the commission consider borrowing or taking advantage of other preexisting media.

X. Clarification on Initiative Reporting Requirement for Counties

Jane Henderson commented that while there is not much for county commissions to report on this year, the statute requires all county commissions to submit an audit and a report by October 15.

Janie Daigle and Frank Furtek, legal counsel, confirmed that reports and audits are due by October 15. The state commission is also obligated to submit an audit and a report. Jane Henderson will issue an advisory or memo regarding what to include in the required audits and reports.

Kim Belshe commented that the state commission hesitates to burden county commissions with this requirement, but it is a good chance to hear of the good things counties have been doing.

XI. Discuss and Give Staff Direction Regarding Welcome Baby Kit

Chair Reiner announced that the "Welcome Baby Kits" is intended to include five videos with supplemental materials regarding local programs and resources that will be received by every parent and caregiver in California. The commission would like to do this by the first of next year.

Susan Lacey commented that the commission has to be sensitive to those who are receiving the kits. Perhaps there are some who will need to watch this with a public nurse, for example. The commission needs to make sure that these videos are truly useful.

Patty Siegel commented that the hardest part of this project is going to be the sifting and sorting of information to find out what is the most important to pass on to parents. The commission must attempt not to overwhelm them; professionals desire to pass on 10 times as much information as parents are able to absorb. This problem can be remedied, however, by the design itself. Patty suggested the commission establish a consumer advisory committee, or a minimum of 10 to 12 parents of very young children, to look at and consider the important issues of parenting.

Sandra Gutierrez suggested that the Commission look beyond county facilities for distribution of these kits, for community based organizations often are more accessible and more trusted by people in the community.

Margaret Fortune added that the parents focus groups indicated that parents want a kit they can leave the hospital with; they also desire one location that defines services that exist within the county (whether it by physical or virtual).

Patty Siegel noted that this information is not static; it is changing constantly. The project will take a lot of thought about the nature of services and the manner in which they change and move.

Rob asked how resource and referral services are updated.

Patty Siegel suggested having one video in the kit be the welcome video or an overview video; this will help parents not to feel so overwhelmed.

Ed Melia commented that there are preexisting areas of entry in hospitals for things such as this kit. Ed offered the offices of Health and Human Services for this purpose.

Kim Belshe encouraged Jane Henderson and Rob Reiner to sit down with the California Medical Association and discuss California hospitals' role in the welcome baby kit project.

Public Comment:

Erica Benson, California State Association of Counties – commented that she came home from the hospital after having her first baby with many materials, yet was so busy with the baby that she did not have the time to look at all videos. She asked that the commission please consider what information is already available.

Rob Reiner asked Erica if it would have been helpful to have received the videos while pregnant.

Erica responded that it would, except a mother is often preparing more for the physical birth than being a parent. She commented that phone numbers are critical, especially in the evening.

Neal Kaufman, Los Angeles County Commission – commented that there are key touch-points in the development of a family that occur pre-pregnancy, during pregnancy, at birth, at one year, and around three years. He suggested that the commission distribute a series of kits.

Elena Ong, Technical Assistance Committee/parent – commented that when she was a first-time parent, she was very hungry for information. She suggested that the commission make a videotape available at video rental stores and at family planning organizations.

B.A. Jinadu, Kern County – reminded the commission that not everybody has VCRs. He asked if the commission could produce audio tapes as well.

Rob Reiner responded that parents need to see the physical interaction between parent and child. For those who do not have VCRs, the commission will provide a brochure. The commission may also provide tapes at locations where people can view them.

B.A. Jinadu, Kern County – asked if the commission can play the tapes at movie theaters before the movies start.

Rob Reiner responded that the commission may use theaters to advertise the materials that are available.

Sandra Gutierrez suggested playing the videos on Spanish language television stations.

Patty Siegel suggested the commission use Spanish speaking radio stations as well.

Jan Peterson, Riverside County Commission – commented that the Child Care Consortium published a child and family resource guide which was sponsored partially by Pacific Bell. She suggested the commission think about telephone companies for sponsorship. She emphasized the need for Spanish language videos/brochures.

Alice Walker Duff, Los Angeles Commission – commented that while most think about infants and babies, many do not pay attention to older pre-kindergarten children (like 4 and 5 year olds). Parents of these older children are a good place to find support. The commission needs to pay attention to those who do not have health insurance and are not inundated with materials on how to take care of children, use quality child care, etc. Dr. Duff asked the commission who to refer people to when they offer her videos, materials, etc., for the welcome baby kit.

Rob Reiner suggested she contact Jane Henderson until a staff member is hired specifically for this purpose.

Sandra Gutierrez asked that once a staff person is hired to oversee this project if they can please report to the state commission with a timeline.

Kiran Saliya, WIC – commented that the WIC program is a good resource for the state commission. She reminded the commission to be careful when choosing partners to work with.

Patty Siegel commented that Prop. 10 brings an overarching new and different mandate to look at things in an integrated way. Therefore the welcome baby kit must not just provide information, the commission must first analyze what similar kits are currently available and then present information to parents in an integrated way.

XII. Consideration and Approval of Date(s) to Release Funds

Rob Reiner recommended that the first payment to county commissions be one month after the release of guidelines on September 16. He moved to release the first payment to county commissions on Monday, October 18, 1999, and then to release funds on a monthly basis; Bob Ross seconded. Rob Reiner opened the floor for discussion.

Mickey Richie, County Health Executives Association of California – suggested that the commission talk with the Controller's office to make sure they are able to release the funds on this exact date.

Rob Reiner amended his motion to say that the funds will be released on October 18, 1999, or as soon thereafter as the Controller's office may do so.

Mickey Richie – commented that Kathleen Connell said at the April 15, 1999, meeting that interest accrued by this account would go back into this account. She asked when October 18th comes, if the interest be distributed as well or if it be handled in a different way.

Rob Reiner answered that he thinks it will also be distributed but he will check with the Controller's office to make sure.

Ed Melia asked what the relationship is between statute requirements and monies released.

Rob Reiner answered that money cannot be disbursed into programs until a strategic plan has been submitted to the state commission.

Erica Benson, California State Association of Counties – commented that she appreciates that the money will be released soon and she asked the commission to please work with the 15 counties who have not fulfilled the requirements of the statute. She also commented that she would like to know estimates of how much each county is getting.

The commission voted on Chair Reiner's motion; the motion passed with a vote of 6 to 0.

Susan Lacey – provided a point of clarification – the funds will be released to those commissions which reside within the boundaries of the counties; not to the counties themselves.

XIII. Consideration, Discussion and Approval of the Proposed Conflict of Interest Code for the California Children and Families Commission (setting forth the designated positions and disclosure categories pertaining to the filing of statements of economic interests) for Submission to the Office of Administrative Law for Public Notice and Comment.

Janie Daigle explained the reasons necessary to approve this language. Bob Ross moved to approve the language; Sandra Gutierrez seconded. The motion passed with a vote of 6 to 0.

XIV. Public Hearing on Draft Guidelines

Rob Reiner proposed holding the public comment section of the meeting now and then holding the public hearing on draft guidelines at 1:00 p.m.

XV. Public Comment

Cindy Soto, Sierra's Light Foundation – commented that her organization is trying to increase safety in schools and centers for young children. The organization is looking for funding, and is going to launch a public awareness campaign; she hopes the commission would consider funding these efforts.

Mark Bogetich, C2 Consumer Research – commented that his organization conducted parent focus groups for the parent education and family support subcommittee of the guidelines committee. The organization is happy to hear that their research will be used for a welcome baby kit and a resource guide. The focus groups research found that parents would appreciate a 24-hour parenting/talk line and a multi-service community center.

Sandra Gutierrez asked if the focus groups were conducted in any languages other than English.

Mark Bogetich responded that one focus group in Fresno was conducted in Spanish.

Monica Lopes, University of California – presented the book "Scientist in the Crib" to the commission and an accompanying press release.

XVI. Closed Session: Discussion and Status Report From Legal Counsel Regarding Pending Litigation:

- 1) California Association of Retail Tobacconists, Inc. et al., v. State of California, Board of Equalization of the State of California, California Children and Families First Commission and Kathleen Connell, as Controller of the State of California, San Diego County Superior Court Case No. 732079; Government Code §11126(e)(1) and 11126(e)(2)(A).
- 2) Cigarettes Cheaper! and The Customer Company v. Board of Equalization of the State of California, Kathleen Connell, as Controller of the State of California, and the California Children and Families First Commission, Sacramento County Superior Court Case No. 99AS03606; Government Code §11126(e)(1) and 11126(e)(2)(A).”

No action items were taken during closed session.

The commission broke for lunch at 11:45 a.m.

The commission reconvened at 1:00 p.m. for the public hearing on guidelines.

XVII. Public Hearing on Draft Guidelines

Patty Siegel recognized members and staff of the guidelines committee; she then briefed the audience on the process of developing the guidelines and the different sections of the Guidelines, which include planning, child care and early education, health and wellness, and parent education and support services. Patty commented that in each section, the guidelines offer goals that reflect the initiative itself and public comment, then objectives, then strategies and planning considerations (as examples). After today, the committee will take public comments and integrate them into the guidelines. Then the committee will hold another public hearing in Sacramento next Wednesday. The committee is also taking written comments by fax (916/323-0069) and by mail (501 J Street, Suite 530, Sacramento, CA 95814). The revised guidelines will then be circulated by September 6 and final approval of the guidelines will occur at the September 16 state commission meeting.

Rob Reiner reminded the commissioners that their thoughts can be directed to Jane if they haven't time to read the entire guidelines yet. He suggested that the guidelines be edited and that repetition, in terms of the intention of the commission, be omitted. He suggested that there be an emphasis for the allocation of funds as to where they are more needed, like the at-risk and the lower-income population. In regards to the health and wellness section, he suggested that the guidelines must stress the emotional component of child wellness (which is the one area that can impact society the most).

Bob Ross commented that the document well exceeded his expectations. Guidelines, as he sees them, should be the first 20 pages of the document in order

to show what the commission would like to see in a county strategic plan. The commission should provide results for the counties to work from. He commented that it would be nice to get the county commission to endorse the state commission's mission/vision. He suggested that in their respective communities in 10, 5, 3 years. He commented that there needs to be an identification of problems/issues that Prop. 10 can directly affect and those that it cannot.

Ed Melia commented that he feels the guidelines fall short in terms of integration of services and that the guidelines should identify linkages to programs. Ed commented that he wants to make a special effort to outreach to Prop. 10 commissioners and the Prop. 10 community at large in an ongoing effort to providing technical assistance and trainee expertise.

Sheila Derrig, Los Angeles Unified School District – commended the commissioners on the comprehensiveness of the guidelines and the mention of quality childcare. She suggested mentioning school districts on page 20. She suggested the commission set up goals to upgrade the quality of staff to deal with young children and to differentiate between childcare and early childhood education. She suggested that the commission support the requirement of at least an AA degree for early childhood educators. She would like to see a career ladder (with appropriate compensation) for early childhood educators. She also emphasized the need for defined outcomes.

B.A. Jinadu, Kern County – commented that the guidelines will significantly help county commissions. He commented that the state commission's role is to make a shared value system between counties in order to provide consistent services to all California children.

Erica Benson, California State Association of Counties – suggested that the planning section have concrete examples because basic areas need to be fleshed out before more provocative questions can be answered. Also, she commented that it is important to realize that this money cannot address every problem, thus all prescriptive words should be deleted.

Mickey Richie, County Health Executives Association of California – asked that when the guidelines committee meet next week if they will be looking at same document and asked when the deadline for comments on the guidelines is.

Jane Henderson answered that they will be looking at the same document on Wednesday and that comments on the guidelines should be submitted by August 27.

Patty Siegel encouraged all comments to be submitted before August 25th.

Mickey Richie, California Health Executives Association of California – encouraged the commission to distribute this deadline through e-mail, etc. Also,

she commented that there is no mention of fiscal planning in the guidelines. She commented that the commission needs to be careful of the use of the word “county” because even though the state commission knows that they mean “county commission,” others may not.

Mary Emmons, Children’s Institute – commented that she would like to see the guidelines pay more overall attention to the needs of at-risk children and their families. She suggested that page 8 define special needs children and should also identify children who have special needs as a result of child abuse/neglect or other social ills. She suggested formatting a workgroup to identify at-risk children and families.

Linda Lavery, mother – encouraged the state commission to include cultural sensitivity and to lift programs that have been around for years.

Kathy McGrogan – suggested that the parent education and family support section should address violence in the home and how can we help children who have been exposed to violence, for this is an issue that parents often find hard to bring up on their own.

Jill Cannon, RAND – commented that county commissions are going to have to set their priorities and the state commission should provide assistance in how to research the more effective ways to allocate limited funds.

Rob Reiner agreed that while a cost-benefit analysis shows that investing funds in at-risk families is one of the most beneficial investments, county commissions should realize that Prop. 10 funds are diminishing.

Michelle Swaving, Child Guidance Center – emphasized the importance of early childhood education development. She commented that the Child Guidance Center sees a lot of families who do not have resources available to them in order to prepare their children to learn. The center believes they have the information parents need, but asks the state commission how they can help disseminate this information to parents.

Patty Siegel agreed that parents should receive all this information, but this is not something that can be done through the guidelines. She stated that Jane Henderson has been given the Center’s materials and will take them into consideration.

Sandra Gutierrez expressed concern about the best practices sections of the guidelines, for she felt that much research does not take some demographic considerations into account.

Kiran Saliya, California Breastfeeding Promotion Committee – commented that breastfeeding is an issue beyond general nutrition; it is a practice that almost every woman can do, but it is difficult to do in this environment. It is proven to improve maternal-infant bonding, cognition, etc. She encouraged the commission to make breastfeeding an area of concentration.

Lisa Dryan, parent – encouraged the commission to hold public forums in order to get parents with children in this age group to provide input. She commented that meetings should be more convenient for parents – shorter, on weekends, at night, in places with areas to breastfeed and changing diapers. She suggested the commission give away something (like diapers, for example) and hold meetings in locations that people trust, like parks, instead of county buildings.

Jan Peterson, Riverside County – commented that the guidelines are lacking in terms of guidance for integration of services. Also, she sees a lot of the same goals/objectives of other organizations. Prop. 10 is an opportunity not only to improve upon other programs but also to implement new programs. She commented that while the guidelines address the needs of at-risk and low-income families, they should not neglect middle income families who don't qualify for subsidies and have many children.

Ed Warren – commented that in terms of where and who to focus on, the commission should focus on everybody. He commended the commission for including parents as a main focus in the guidelines. Regarding integration, he feels that the issue is not at the state or county level, but rather at the neighborhood level. The guidelines should show how parents are involved in decision-making and how to integrate services at the neighborhood level.

Bob Ross reminded the commission and the audience that the guidelines are merely guidelines and not regulations.

Patty Siegel asked the audience to please send short, concise responses to the guidelines.

Alice Walker-Duff announced that the Los Angeles County Commission meeting is tomorrow at 1:30 p.m. in the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration.

XVIII. Adjournment

Rob Reiner moved to adjourn the meeting; Patty Siegel seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.